



ROLE OF RTE IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Ms. Reena Devi

Assistant Professor, Hindu College of Education, Sonapat.

ABSTRACT

Children being future of our society are very important part of it. Any lacunae in their early education can have long-term consequences on their development. Not to be educated, not to acquire basic literacy and numeracy is a serious disability, both for child and for coming generations. Every child in our country has a right to education. RTE mandates free and compulsory education to all children from 6-14 years of age. The key objective of RTE-SSA is universalization of elementary education (UEE). Three important aspects of UEE are access, enrolment and retention of all children in 6-14 years of age. This goal of UEE, has further been facilitated by the constitutional (86th amendment) act, making free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right, for all the children with special needs, as without their inclusion the objective of Universalization of education cannot be achieved.

KEYWORDS: RTE, universal elementary education, inclusive education, fundamental right.

Introduction:

If education is a fundamental right then children with special needs also deserve an equal chance at pursuing their academic aspirations. In order to achieve truly inclusive education, we need to think about and incorporate children with special needs into regular schools. Especially because these children face some sort of problems in learning and participation in the class-room. The right to education must apply to all. RTE gives a ripe platform to reach the unreached, with specific provisions for disadvantaged groups, such as child labourers, migrant children, children with special needs, or those who have a "disadvantage owing to social, cultural, economical, geographical, linguistic, gender or search factor". RTE mandates free and compulsory education to all children from 6-14 years of age. The key objective of RTE is universalisation of elementary education (UEE). Three important aspects of UEE are access, enrollment and retention of all children of 6-14 years of age. This goal of UEE has been facilitated by the constitutional RTE Act, 2009 (86th amendment) making free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right, for all the children with special needs (CWSN), as without their inclusion, the objective of UEE can not be achieved. In fact inclusion of one of the groups, which is extremely crucial for UEE is perhaps that of the CWSN.

Inclusion in context of education is the practice, in which students with special educational needs spend most or all of their time with non-disabled students. Inclusive education is a human right, it is good education and it makes good social sense. By RTE (right of education) in inclusive education state shall be ensured an inclusive education system at all levels. By this, inclusive education lays foundation to an inclusive society accepting, respecting and celebrating diversity. It brings social justice and equity in educational system. RTE gives us objectives for inclusive education. We need to achieve these goals for every child. It is both an opportunity and a duty.

Inclusive Education is a major point of debate in education circles both at national and international levels worldwide. The earlier system of segregated education with special school for children had left a lot to be desired especially regarding reaching out to children with disabilities. According to UNESCO, around 90% of the children with disabilities in developing countries are out of school. It is now believed that this approach should be replaced by inclusive education with emphasis on rights, equal opportunity and participation. Inclusion in context of education is the practice, in which students with special educational needs spend most or all of their time with non-disabled students. Implementation of practice varies; schools can use it for selected students with mild to severe special needs. Inclusive education differs from previously held notions of 'integration' and 'mainstreaming', which tended to be concerned principally with disability and 'special educational needs' and implied learners changing or becoming 'ready for' accommodation by mainstream. Inclusive education means that "schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups" (UNESCO, 2001). It is in the context that inclusion means encompassing:

- The marginalized and disadvantaged, whether they be poor, rural and urban slum residents, ethnic and linguistic minorities, or the disabled;
- All age groups, from early childhood (ECCE) to adults (especially literacy);

and

- Girls and women

India is obliged under the UN convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities to provide barrier-free access to persons with disabilities and to ensure that children with special needs "have full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children" Article 21-A (RTE) of the constitution of India guarantees the right of free and compulsory education for all children between the age of 6-14 years as a fundamental right. The uniqueness of this right is that it is implementable through an enacted legislation. RTE of children with special needs has two layers:

- (1) The right to education
- (2) The right of inclusion into society through education.

The right of children to free and compulsory education act or right to education act (RTE) is an Indian legislation enacted by the Parliament of India on 4 August 2009, which describes the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child when the act came into force on 1 April 2010. This act differs from previous policies on education, as it is not a 'directive principle' to frame policies but an obligatory commitment to ensure free and compulsory education to the children in the prescribed age.

Inclusive Education

Children with special needs and disabilities also have the right to education just as a normal child. Inclusive Education strives to address the learning needs of children with special needs, with a particular focus to those who are subject to being isolated. The philosophy behind Inclusive Education is to promote opportunities for all children to participate, learn and have an equal treatment irrespective of their physical and mental abilities. There are several government schemes that aim at providing quality primary education for all children. There are several National and local NGOs that champion the cause of children with disabilities and provide specific resource centres in support of Inclusive Education.

The Ministry of Social Welfare

The 1960 marked an important change in how Special Education was organized in India. The Ministry of Education split and a new branch called the Ministry of Social Welfare was created. The Ministry of Social Welfare was given the responsibility for the "weak and vulnerable sections of society". They focused on rehabilitation, and not as much on education. The Minister began to give out grants to non-profits that provided education for children with disabilities.

The Kothari Commission

The Government of India created Kothari Commission in 1964 named after its Chairman, P.S. Kothari. This commission was created because the Government of India wanted to create a plan of action to improve the education system. The plan of action created by the Kothari commission included people with disabilities, but unfortunately, the Government of India never implemented it. There were some reasons like the previously mentioned split in 1964 with the Ministry of Education and the subsequent policy of assistance to Voluntary Organization and the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

The Integrated Education of Disabled Children Scheme (1974)

The Ministry of Welfare created the Integrated Education of Disabled Children Scheme (IEDC), not to be confused with the Integrated Child Development Scheme in 1974. The programme provided children with disabilities "financial support for books, school uniform, transportation, special equipment and aids, with the intention of using these aids to include children in mainstream classrooms. However, the Government of India realized that providing structural changes to the classroom, such as adapted equipment would not be enough to integrate children with disabilities into the classroom. Although it was encouraged and partly funded by UNICEF. Fifty percent of the funding was supposed to go through the state government. The responsibility was transferred to Department of Education in 1992. Despite the fact that this scheme was supposed to be nation-wide it was implemented in only 10 out of 29 states in India.

The National Policy on Education (1986)

The National Policy on Education was created in 1986 continuing in the spirit of the 1974 (IEDC). NPE states that children with "mild" disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms, whereas children with "moderate to severe" disabilities should be placed in segregated schools. Many were upset because these policy contracted Article 45 of the Constitution which says Equality in Education as a fundamental right. The policy included a provision regarding teacher training for all mainstream education teachers by including special education teachers in pre service training of general teachers. The policy was created in 1986 and it was not implemented until the plan of action created in 1992. A child with disabilities who can be educated in the general school should not be in the special school.

Once children with disabilities acquire basic living skills in resource room or special school should be mainstreamed.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

The Government of India created the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan an initiative which translates to "Education for all". It is a disability inclusive programme, with specific aspects that benefit people with disabilities.

The program seeks to open a new school in those areas which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through provision of extra classroom, toilets, drinking water, maintenance and school improvement grants. SSA provides upto rupees 3000 per child for the inclusion of disabled children as per specific proposals per year. District plan for children with special needs is formulated within the Rs. 3000 per child norm, with Rs. 1000/- earmarked exclusively for engagement of resource teachers.

The interventions under SSA for inclusive education are identification, functional and formal assessment, appropriate educational placement, preparation of individualized educational plan, provision of aids and appliances, teacher training, resource support, removal of architectural barriers, research, monitoring and evaluation and special focus on girls with special needs.

The practice adopted by SSA states is that of the home based education for children with severe-profound disabilities with the objective of either preparing CWSN for schools or for life by imparting to them basic living skills. States like HP and UK are using NGOs for this purpose whereas states like Karnataka and Kerala have appointed volunteers who visits the homes of CWSN to provide them basic functional skills. Parental counseling and vocational training are two important aspects of entire home based instruction programme.

No matter what the educational setting, it is widely accepted that there can be no inclusion of CWSN without adequate resource support. This aspect has been taken care of in SSA mainly through NGOs, inclusive education resource teachers, and volunteers or by imparting long term training to regular teachers on inclusion. States like Haryana have opened model inclusive schools in every block and equipped them with all possible facilities. Another recent initiative of SSA, states has been of providing disabled friendly toilets. Besides increasing the physical coverage, the expenditure on inclusive education in SSA has also shown an upward trend.

Role of NGOs

In India, the non-government sector plays an active role in the provision of services for people with disabilities NGOs have been involved in the field of educating children with disabilities since the early 1950s when parents of children with disabilities started special schools and parent organizations to meet the needs of their own children. Most of these organizations flourished in urban areas. The government recognized that these NGOs were well placed to reach people with disabilities and supported them, through various grants in aid. In 1970s and 1980s there was a dramatic increase in the number of NGOs in India. International development aid organization, such as NORAD, SIDA, DANIDA, Action aid, and others encouraged NGOs to try innovative approaches for reaching people with disabilities. The government is promoting the role of NGOs at all levels to achieve development.

Conclusion

At the end, it can be said that the government has made so many policies according to the need of time for the quality education. Policies in India has always

leaned towards inclusion. From the Constitution to the Kothari Commission in the early days of the republic, to the 2005, action plan for children and youth with disabilities and 2006 National policy for people with disabilities recently, the Indian government tends to write inclusion policies on education. However these policies often are not inclusion. Many of them tend to discriminate against people with "Severe" present the policies governing the disabilities. Still at inclusive at present, the problem is with implementation. Through these various schemes and policies, government is trying to fulfill the nation of RTE. So we can say that the role of RTE is for inclusive education has a great importance in a real sense. Through RTE in inclusive education special children have skills and abilities for independent living and community inclusion, gainful employment, Participation in political and public life, the ability to effectively navigate the judicial systems which are all aspects of everyone's basic human rights.

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